

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP PGOV PDIP AR
SUBJ: MEETING BETWEEN THE VICE PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT VIDELA

REFS: A) STATE 226556; B) BUENOS AIRES 7065

1. I TOOK ADVANTAGE OF PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING WITH GENERAL VIOLA THIS EVENING TO DISCUSS SUBJECT OF PARAGRAPH EVEN REFTEL A.

2. GENERAL VIOLA RECEIVED ME SMILING BROADLY AND IMMEDIATELY VOLUNTEERED THE OBSERVATION THAT HE BELIEVED THE ROME MEETING HAD GONE VERY WELL AND THAT HE NOW BELIEVED THAT THE US DOES VALUE ITS RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA. I ASSURED HIM THAT THIS HAD ALWAYS BEEN THE CASE BUT THAT OUR EFFORTS HAD NOT ALWAYS BEEN WELL UNDERSTOOD. I ASSURED HIM THAT WE ALSO WERE DELIGHTED WITH THE ROME MEETING.

3. WE MOVED IMMEDIATELY TO THE TOPIC OF A POSSIBLE VISIT OF THE IAHRG AND I ASKED HIM IF THIS WOULD RUN INTO TROUBLE IN THE JUNTA. VIOLA SAID ABSOLUTELY NOT. IT WAS AN INITIATIVE OF PRESIDENT VIDELA AND HE (VIOLA) FULLY SUPPORTED IT. WHEN I INQUIRED ABOUT THE TIMING

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OF A VISIT AND/OR ANNOUNCEMENT OF IT, HE SAID THAT THESE WERE MATTERS FOR THE PRESIDENT TO WORK OUT BUT HE BELIEVED THE PRESIDENT FELT HE COULD ARRANGE AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE VISIT BY MID-OCTOBER AND THAT THEY WOULD LOOK FORWARD TO A VISIT BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY VAKY TOWARD THE END OF OCTOBER.

4. VIOLA CLEARLY INDICATED HE HAD RECEIVED SOME POSITIVE SIGNALS FROM THE USG, REFERRING TO THE RELEASE OF FMS PURCHASES. HE SAID THAT THIS WAS SOME INDICATION THAT THE US WAS SERIOUS ABOUT WISHING BETTER TIES WITH ARGENTINA. HE THEN OBSERVED THAT WE WOULD DEFINITELY SEE CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD SOON. (WE UNDERSTAND ANOTHER LIST OF ABOUT 65 PRISONER RELEASES IS SCHEDULED FOR THIS WEEKEND AND THAT VIOLA IS PERSONALLY CLAMPING DOWN ON COUNTER-TERRORIST OPERATIONS IN THE 1ST CORPS.)

5. I TOLD VIOLA I HAD A HALF DOZEN FORMER ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTERS AND AMBASSADORS TO LUNCH AT THE RESIDENCE TODAY AND WE HAD A DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THE

IAHRC AND WHETHER A VISIT WOULD IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF REPORTING BY THE COMMISSION. THEY WERE UNANIMOUS IN THEIR VIEW THAT A COMMISSION VISIT WOULD ON BALANCE BE DESIRABLE. TWO OF THEM EVEN UNDERTOOK TO BUILD UP FAVORABLE PUBLIC OPINION TO THIS END IN THEIR PRESS AND MAGAZINE COLUMNS. VIOLA WAS INTRIGUED AT THIS NEWS. HIS STATEMENT THAT THE IAHRC WOULD VISIT WAS FLAT AND UNQUALIFIED.

6. WHEN WE TOOK UP THE MATTER OF A POSSIBLE WASHINGTON VISIT FOR LT. COLONEL CERDA, WHOM VIOLA DESCRIBED AS
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A BRIGHT LAWYER "IN WHOM WE HAVE GREAT CONFIDENCE" VIOLA SAID HE WOULD ASK CERDA TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ME IN WASHINGTON ON SEPTEMBER 10 WITH A VIEW TOWARD ARRANGING MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON THE FOLLOWING DAY. THOUGH THE NOTICE IS SHORT THIS COULD GIVE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PRESIDENT TO GIVE CERDA MORE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS ON THE TIMING OF ANNOUNCEMENT AND THE VAKY VISIT.

7. I WILL BE SEEING YOFRE LATER THIS EVENING TO FURTHER CONFIRM WHAT HAS BEEN REPORTED IN PROCEEDING CABLE ON THIS TOPIC (REFTEL B).
CASTRO

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